THE CURSE OF ALL AGES.

Leprosy, the Oldest Disease of the World May Not Be Contagious.

By the recent discovery of a Japanese, in Philadelphia, who was afflicted with leprosy, and who had been cook in a restaurant up to a short time before he was put in the hospital, is forcibly brought to mind the present question, Is leprosy incurable?

In his lecture before the section of of State medicine and hygiene, Dr. J. Hutchinson, of London, a distinguished pathologist, not only maintained that leprosy is absolutely not contagious, but that it is by a special kind of poison taken into the system in connection with food that the loathsome disease is induced. Certain specific kind of bacteria have been found in the blood of lepers which is only found in a certain kind of fish, and it is by eating of this fish—just as the eating of raw or diseased pork will induce trichinosis—that the healthy individual becomes a leper. This species of fish is asserted by Dr. Hutchinson to be common in leprosy districts, and as the varieties of the disease are the same the world over, the cause, he argues, must always be the same.

Leprosy is the oldest disease recognized by medical authorities in the world. It was epidemic in the earliest times, from 1700 to 2000 B. C., in the delta of the Nile, in Egypt. Egypt was regarded by the ancients as the original breeding-place of leprosy, and it was from there that the children of Israel carried it forth with them in the exodus. From Egypt it spread all over the civilized world. The crusades helped to extend its ravages, and during the eleventh and twelfth centuries it is estimated that not less than 19,000 leper houses, retreats and hospitals for the disease were opened in Europe.

Another authority is Dr. A. Prince Morrow, who in June, 1889, read a paper before the New York Academy of Medicine, describing his observations of leprosy in the Sandwich Islands, Mexico and this country. His conclusions were that the disease is distinctly and undisputably contagious, and that it is the duty of civilization to combat its advance among enlightened nations. This can only be done by thorough and complete isolation of those afflicted.

It is said that they are 400 cases of leprosy in the United States. There is a colony in the Parish of St. Mary's, Plaquemine District, Louisiana, within 100 miles of New Orleans. There is another colony in Wisconsin. There are also several colonies in Canada, in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

No remedy has yet been discovered that will do more than ameliorate the sufferings of the lepers. Last year two doctors in India—one at Calcutta and the other at Mangalore—announced that they had cured several cases of leprosy. Nothing more has been heard concerning these cures, which, doubtless, were interstitial leprosy, a very mild form, and least contagious. Or, it is possible, the East Indian medical experts may have been deceived in their diagnosis. Great circumstantiality was given to the report; the cost of successful treatment was said to be only 10 rupees.

The contagiousness of the disease was universally recognized in ancient times, and the lepers were isolated and forbidden to mingle with the people. They were confined to certain quarters of the cities and villages, and certain streets and lanes were set apart for their use, which were forbidden to the general public. They wore gray or black gowns, with hoods to cover the face, and carried a bell or wooden contrivance, after the fashion of old English constables' attles, to warn people of their approach. The lepers were forbidden to enter churches, inns, stores or workshops; to touch a healthy person or eat with them, to wash in a running stream or walk in narrow footpaths.

The rigorous measures thus taken had the effect of stamping out the disease in Europe to a great measure. There still survive, however, colonies of lepers in all parts of the world, and there are very few civilized nations without some lepers in their midst.

HIS FIRST KISS.

How a German Officer Won a Jolly American Girl for His Wife.

A funny courtship was that of a well-known New York girl who is now married to one of the kaiser's officers. Graf von S——, who is a frank, direct sort of creature, with the stature of a giant, and the simplicity of a child, was captivated at once by the wild spirits of Edith A——'s girlish fun—fun which must have been "so unbecoming" in a Deutsches Madchen, but which was perfectly allowable in the American "Mees" (a distinction, by the way, which is almost universally made on the continent, our young countrywoman having much greater latitude allowed them than any others). Their first meeting was startling, to say the least of it. After a very lively dinner at the house of an American lady who had married a German officer, the ladies left the dining-room and lingered a moment in the little hall that connected with the drawing-room, to show Miss A——, who had just arrived in Germany, the heavy Prussian helmets of the officers, which they had left on the table.

"How uncomfortable this must be," said the girl, and lifting the cumbrous piece of armor and placing it on her own head, she turned laughingly to her companions. What was her surprise and consternation when, from the opposite dining-room door she saw it at dinner, by whom she had not been introduced, Graf von S——, rise from his seat, and without the slightest hesitation, stalked across the room with military precision and in the most natural and matter-of-fact manner—kissed her! Of course, she was furiously angry, and she was not at all appeased when she was told that it was a well-known German custom, and that she had brought it upon herself by putting on Graf S——'s helmet. She appeared to have forgiven him the next evening, moreover, for they danced the "cotillion" together at the court ball; and not more than a fortnight later Mme. R——, Edith A——'s quondam hostess at the eventful dinner, burst in upon some of her particular cronies, who were having afternoon tea at a friend's house, with: "Only fancy! What fun! I have just heard Graf S—— propose to Edith! I took them to the picture gallery this afternoon, and seeing a friend, left them for a few minutes in the little room where the Sistine Madonna is; and when I returned I was startled by hearing Count S—— saying in his wonderfully funny English: 'I have lofed since the first eyewink' (augenblick). I nearly screamed with laughter, but as they had not seen me I beat a hurried retreat and left them there, and here I am."

Of course the company were greatly edified, and when Edith herself sauntered in an hour later to find her friend she was surprised at their hilarity, and it was many months after she had been married into the same regiment as Madame R——, that the latter lady ventured to tell her how she had inadvertently overheard the proposal.—New York Tribune.

A Modern Miracle.

If the man who makes two blades of grass grow where only one grew before is entitled to be called a public benefactor, certainly the man who turns an odious stench into a pleasing fragrance has a claim for credit not to be ignored. The days of necromancy are not past; they are only beginning, and in a dingy red brick house on the East Side of this city a striking example of this fact may be seen at any time.

There is probably no person who regards rancid butter as anything but a highly offensive substance, and there are few, outside the uninitiated, who can think of any better use to be made of it than to throw it into the ash barrel. The initiated know better. There are few housewives and cooks who, when they flavor their custards, pies, cakes, etc., with delicious essence of pineappe, do not imagine that tons of that luscious tropical fruit are daily gathered by dusky natives from waving palms and amid scenes of harvest revelry, and then squeezed of their fragrant juice for the special benefit of the American palate. But the "trade" knows that the pineapple oil of commerce is really butyric ether.

Now, there is no cause for alarm to the reader who first becomes aware of that fact by reading this article. Butyric ether is a charmingly fragrant, innocuous and delightful substance, and if the genuine pineapple itself were not pretty full of it, that much-prized fruit would command no better price than turnips; perhaps not as good. The only startling feature is the fact that butyric ether, which tastes and smells so good in cu-tard or soda water, is produced from the most horribly rancid butter. Turning pure water into new wine seems simple alongside this modern miracle.

The miracle worker takes his rancid butter and mixes it into a soapy lather with potash and sulphuric acid at first. This results in a thin, oily liquid which has even a more persistently rancid odor than the butter had at first. It is then called butyric acid. Being distilled with alcohol and more sulphuric acid, the marvelous result is a fragrant and altogether delightful substance known as butyric ether, or pineapple oil. Used in moderation it does no harm to the stomach, but it should not be used as a perfume, because when inhaled it tends to cause irritation of the air tubes and intense headache.—New York Tribune.

Snakes in India.

A contemporary remarks that, in spite of the large sums paid every year in India as rewards for the destruction of poisonous reptiles, the latter seem to be as numerous as ever, no less than 800 persons having been killed in the Punjaub last year by snake bites. Our contemporary suggests that the prevalence of snakes may be attributed partly to the Mussulman prejudice against swine and to the British love of pig sticking. Snakes and hogs cannot live together, and, in the struggle for existence, it is the hogs that survive. On the whole, we should be more inclined to attribute the snakes to the high rewards that are offered for their destruction. The wily native is quite capable of keeping preserves of them, and thus earning a dishonest and rather risky livelihood.

Philosophy.

In active business life, the world over, men learn to take their ups and downs with calmness. The rich man of to-day may be the poor man of to-morrow, with no course open but to pay his debts and toil upward again.

A financier of Paris, who had been at the "top of the heap," saw his wealth swept away. His friends came in to condole with him. They found him cheerful.

"Ah, well," he said, "I am living along, and disturbing just as few of my habits as possible. I get up at nine o'clock, just as I always used to, and ring the bell for my valet de chambre——"

"What!" his friends exclaimed. "Are you still able to keep a valet?"

"Oh, no," said the ruined man, sighing a little, "but I keep the bell."